ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

OF THE

ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT

FOR THE YEAR 1922.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This report is of the kind technically called "Ordinary" as opposed to a "Survey" report, which is made every fifth year. The last survey report was made for 1920. In this report I follow as closely as possible the directions of the Ministry of Health in circular 359 (England).

The climatic conditions of the year 1922, although in no way extreme, could not be considered as very favourable to a district which is mainly agricultural. In January there was a sharp but not very prolonged fall of snow which was hardly sufficient to fill up the water supplies, which had been so severely depleted by the prolonged drought of the previous year. The Spring was as genial as we can expect and the finest weather of the year was experienced in May and the beginning of June. From that time onwards a lack of sunshine and a a prevalence of cold winds made the year a most disappointing one. Although there was no excessive rainfall, yet the lateness of ripening made the corn crops very difficult to get in, and of indifferent quality when secured.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

The area of the Alnwick Rural District is 93,009 acres.

The population (1921 census) was 12,380. The population as estimated by the Registrar General was 12,480 on June 30th, 1922.

The number of inhabited houses is 2795.
The number of families or separate occupiers is :—
The rateable value is £129,695.
The sum represented by a penny rate is £390.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The statistics forwarded to me by the Registrar-General for the year 1922, after additions and deductions, transferable to and from the district, coincide more exactly than usual with the returns of the local registrars. The births came out exactly with the Registrar-General's figures. Of the deaths my returns show two less. Of those two I am able to account for one, that of a person belonging to Widdrington who died away from home and whose death was transferred to the Alnwick Rural District, doubtless because the postal address was then Acklington. Unfortunately I did not perceive the error in time to object. This leaves only one death unaccounted for, a discrepancy which the Registrar-General points out to be inevitable. This causes a slight discrepancy between the general death and infantile death rate, based on the Registrar-General's figures, and the analysis of causes of, and ages at death, based on the returns of the local registrars.

The following table gives the number of births and deaths belonging to the district, for 1922, and for comparison the figures for the two previous years are also given. The corresponding death and birth rates are also given.

	Births.	Birth Rate per 1000 per annum.	Deaths.	Death Rate per 1000 per annum.
1920 ...	300	24.80	171	14.14
1921 ...	219	17.68	138	11.14
1922 ...	244	19.55	160	12.82

From the above table it will be seen that the births for 1922, although far below those for 1920, yet show a considerable increase on those for 1921. Of the births 121 were males and 123 females. In the years immediately following the war I have noted the marked preponderances of male births, amounting in 1921 to 21. In 1922 the ladies have again come by their own by a bare majority of 2. Of the births 133 were legitimate and 11 illegitimate.

As I pointed out in my last annual report the year 1921 showed the lowest number of deaths ever registered in the district. This low level we could hardly hope to maintain and it will be seen that the number of deaths for 1922, although not high, has swung back nearer the usual number for the district. Perhaps an explanation may be found in the difference of the climatic conditions of those two years, the former so warm and genial, the latter so cold and sunless. The number of deaths in 1922 was 160, being 22 more than in 1921 and 11 less than in 1920, and the rate is 1.68 more than in 1921 and 1.32 less than in 1920.

The following table shows the ages at which the deaths occurred, and for comparison the two previous years are given:

	Under one year.	One and under 2 yrs.	Two and under 5 yrs.	Five and under 15 yrs.	Fifteen and under 25 yrs.	25 yrs. and under 45 yrs.	45 yrs. and under 65 years.	65 years and over	Totals
1920	19	2	2	14	9	11	36	75	166
1921	16	3	3	8	9	9	30	57	135
1922	17	3	3	4	7	15	45	64	158

It will be observed that the deaths for 1922 under 25 years are fewer than in either of the two preceding years, viz., 1922, 23; 1921, 39, and 1920, 46. The number of deaths between 25 and 65 in 1922 is somewhat excessive (60), in fact nearly equal to the deaths over 65. So that the favourable statistics as regards the deaths in early life are neutralised by the large number of deaths of persons of middle age.

DEATHS AND DEATH RATES OF SUB-DISTRICTS.

	Deaths.	Death Rate
Warkworth	93	13.24
Embleton	58	12.50
Denwick	7	9.45

The death rate for the whole district being as stated, 12.82, it will be seen from the above table that the death rate in the Warkworth sub-district exceeded the general rate by .42, the Embleton death rate was less than the general rate by .32, the Denwick death rate was less than the general rate by 3.37.

INFANTILE DEATH RATE.

Fortunately the number of births stated by the Registrar-General for 1922 coincides exactly with the local returns. As already stated the number of births in the district was 244 and 17 children died under one year. This gives an infantile death rate of 69.26 per 1000 children born. This is an improvement on 1921 when the infantile death rate was 77.6, but not so good as 1920 which was only 63.3. The infantile death rate for England and Wales is 77 per thousand children born. Of the 17 deaths 13 are certified as due to "Congenital Debility and Malformation, including premature birth." As to legitimacy, all the deaths were of legitimate children.

The following table shows the distribution of births as regards the sub-districts, the respective birth rates, infantile deaths, and infantile death rates.

Sub-districts.	Births.	Birth Rate.	Infantile Deaths.	Infantile Death Rate.
Warkworth	151	21.5	14	92.7
Embleton	79	17.0	3	37.9
Denwick	14	18.9	0	Nil.

For several years the infantile death rate in the Warkworth sub-district has been less than in the Embleton sub-district. This year the reverse is marked. For the second year in succession the small Denwick sub-district has no infantile death.

From Puerperal Fever, or other Accidents or Diseases of Parturition there have been, in 1922, no deaths in the Alnwick Rural District. This fact may be taken as a test of the efficiency of the medical attendance and nursing of such cases in the district.

DEATHS FROM INFANTILE DISEASES.

Measles (all ages) Nil; Whooping Cough (all ages), 1; Diarrhœa (under 2 years), 1.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 1922 there were notified in the district 26 cases of infectious disease. Of these 8 were cases of Scarlet Fever, 4 of Diphtheria, 4 of Erysipelas, 1 of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, and 9 of Tuberculosis. As regards the sub-districts the distribution of the cases was as follows :—

	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria	Erysipelas	Ophthalmic Neonatorum	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	Other Tuberculosis	Total
Warkworth	4	4	3	1	3	3	18
Embleton	4	0	1	0	3	0	8
Denwick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	8	4	4	1	6	3	26

Scarlet Fever.—The district has been exceptionally free from this disease during 1922 and the sporadic cases which arose were prevented from spreading by isolation as far as was possible in their houses, which were subsequently disinfected.

Diphtheria.—Only 4 cases were notified in the district and prompt measures prevented any spread of the disease beyond the original cases.

Tuberculous Diseases.—Six cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified in the district. Of these 4 were males and 2 females. Three case of Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified, one was a male and two females.

The following table shows the deaths from Notifiable Infectious Diseases and the distribution of those deaths as regards the sub-districts.

	Totals	Warkworth	Embleton	Denwick
Diphtheria	2	2	0	0
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	12	7	4	1
Other Forms of Tuberculosis	3	2	0	0
Totals	17	11	4	1

The following table is an analysis of the ages at which the above deaths occurred.

	Under one year	One and under 2 yrs.	Two and under 5 yrs.	Five and under 15 yrs.	15 and under 25 yrs.	25 and under 45 yrs.	45 Years and under 65 yrs.	65 Years and over
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	0	0	1	0	2	3	6	0
Other Forms of Tuberculosis ...	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0

Only one case of ophthalmic neonatorum was reported in the district and I understand that recovery was satisfactory.

NOTIFICATION OF TUBERCULOUS DISEASE.

Notwithstanding repeated assurances that, except for the officers concerned, strict secrecy is preserved concerning notifications of Tuberculous cases, yet this duty continues to be very imperfectly performed. The Ministry of Health asks this year for the ratio between non-notified tuberculosis deaths and total of tuberculosis deaths. Of the 14 deaths from tuberculosis which occurred within the district I can only trace notifications for 6, which means that less than half even of the fatal cases are notified. Besides these there are

the cases which recover, for tuberculosis is now recognised to be in many cases a very cureable disease. Then all the notifications come from about half the practitioners in the district, the others never notifying a single case. It is difficult to see what action can be taken, as although there are pains and penalties involved by non-notification, yet it is difficult to put these into force, without violating the secrecy associated with notification of tuberculous disease. I would suggest that the Council issue a short note to all medical men practising in the district requesting them for the future to carry out the notification of tuberculosis strictly.

TUBERCULOUS MILK SUPPLY.

There is a point in this connection to which I wish to draw the attention of the Council. There are in this district a number of dairy farms which supply milk to Newcastle-on-Tyne. This milk is systematically examined for tubercle. On any discovery of tubercle the milk is traced to its farm of origin. This farm is excluded from supplying Newcastle until the cows have been all tested with tuberculin. As soon as the diseased cow or cows have been identified the supply can begin again, without the cows affected. There appears to me the possibility that such infected cows might be used for local milk supply, and I think it well to advise the Council to examine their powers of dealing with the ultimate destination of these cows.

DEATHS FROM INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

As shown in a previous table the number of deaths from notificable infectious diseases in 1922 was 17. Of these 2 were caused by diphtheria and 15 by tuberculous disease. This gives a death rate of 1.36 per thousand per annum for notifiable infectious diseases. If to this be added 4 cases of Influenza, 1 case of Whooping Cough and 4 cases of Enteritis, we get a total zymotic death rate of 2.08.

SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

On the above subject I have little to add to my report of 1921. The Beadnell Nursing Association still continues to provide well for the cottage nursing of the northern part of the district. I am not aware that this Association is supported by any County Council Grant although none could be more worthy. The present management of this Association is so excellent that a grant would only be desirable if there were no interference with existing arrangements.

The District Nurses at Alnmouth, Warkworth, Radcliffe, Felton, Bolton, Eglingham, Glanton and Shilbottle and Boulmer continue, under the County Nursing Association, to do excellent work, especially as regards Midwifery. There are no Midwives, as such, in this district, the nurses before mentioned carrying on this work as part of their duties. There are no special nurses for infectious diseases.

HOSPITALS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

In my Survey Report (1920) I went fully into the Hospitals available for the district. The only hospital in the District is the Joint Smallpox Hospital situated about three miles south of the town of Alnwick. This Hospital has recently been carefully inspected by a joint committee of the Alnwick Rural and Urban Councils. It was found generally to be in good condition. It was decided to have a caretaker resident on the premises.

There is no Isolation Hospital for other infectious diseases.

Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children is made by the Alnwick Guardians at their Hospital and Children's Home.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

There are Motor Ambulances at Alnwick and Amble for the use of the district. A carriage is kept at the Smallpox Hospital, but beyond this there is no provision for the transport of infectious cases, there being no Isolation Hospital.

LABORATORY WORK.

The facilities afforded by the County Council for pathological and bacteriological examinations are much appreciated and frequently used by the medical practitioners of the district. Of this I am able to judge by the large number of negative as well as positive notices which I receive from the County Medical Officer. In all suitable cases I am allowed by the Council to supply Diptheria Antitoxin free of cost.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

H W. WALTON, Clerk to the Alnwick Rural District Council and also Clerk to the Alnwick Board of Guardians.

SCOTT PURVES, M.D., M.B.C.M., Ed., Medical Officer of Health, Parochial Medical Officer Lesbury District.

MARMADUKE TEMPLE WILSON, Sanitary Inspector (certified) Member of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

Finally I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their continued support, and the Clerk and the Inspector for their cordial co-operation.

SCOTT PURVES, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR 1922.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Closets.—At Craster north side the work of converting 25 pail closets and privies into closets on the water carriage system is proceeding, eight having been altered, and arrangements made for four others, thirteen remaining to be dealt with, as agreed to by the owners at a Parish Meeting. The conversion of privies into closets at the Butts, Warkworth, is completed, but twenty privies still exist, eleven of which are in yards. Because some of the owners have conservative views in politics it does not necessarily follow that they should think there is any advantage in the conservancy system of closets, especially when excremental filth is stored in their back yards for six months at a stretch, and then, in some cases, carried out through dwelling houses. Six slop water closets exist at Younger's Terrace, Warkworth. Each consists of a vertical 9 inch shaft about 6 feet long from the seat to the drain, which can never be flushed. The drain is flushed by slop water, or a running tap, at a sink close by. Each sink has a high curb round it so that each could contain about six gallons of water when the grating is covered over with a rag. When the clout is snatched away the drain is then flushed under these closets known as " Lamb's Patent." It is only fair to state that this

peculiar patent is not the result of a "brain storm" of any of the Lamb family of Warkworth, especially as the shafts are receptacles for cast-off clothing, and dead cats, which block up the junction with the main sewer.

The offices at Birling North Field, Battlebridge, North Charlton, Lemmington Hill Head, and the Cathill at Lesbury have been re-modelled. Privies have been built in gardens at Shawdon East Lodge, Hartlaw, Radcliffe and Low Burton. Ashpits have been made at Overthwarts and Bolton Mid Stead.

Slaughter Houses.—Two are licensed under Urban powers, at Alnmouth and Embleton, and four at Craster, Felton, Glanton and Radcliffe are only registered. Up-to-date bye-laws are at present under consideration, for the whole of this district, by the Ministry of Health. A new slaughter house has been built on Mount Pleasant Farm at Alnmouth, for use instead of one adjoining the entrance to the village. At Warkworth the killing shop has been sold, and is to be used as a builders' yard, and the slaughtering of animals required for Warkworth is at present being done at Amble.

Disinfection.—In addition to a number of houses disinfected at private expense fifteen dwellings have been disinfected with Formalin by the Council.

Cowsheds.—Under the Milk and Dairies (Amendment) Act, 1922, the register of cowkeepers has been revised, and 26 cowkeepers are certified as wholesale sellers of milk, and 24 as retailers. No suspicions affecting the wholesomeness of milk produced, or sold, in the district have arisen during the year under review.

Sewerage and Drainage.—A new 9 inch sewer, 600 yards long, has been laid by the Council for the new Workmens' Dwellings at Shilbottle Grange, and a great improvement effected by the diversion of the temporary Sewer Outlet laid by

the Coal Co. towards the Grange burn, where the sewage flowed past some spring chambers connected with the Hauxley and Togston Water Supply. At Alnmouth a new cast-iron outfall sewer, on piles, has satisfactorily solved the recurring difficulty of a free outlet in this difficult, and shifting tidal river. The Togston main sewer has been extended across a grazing field to a railway culvert. The main sewer at High Newton-by-the-Sea has been re-laid with sanitary pipes across the village green. At Glanton sewage in Johnson's yard has been diverted from under a dwelling into the main sewer down Cowley's Lane. The South sewer has been extended over the rocks to the tidal water at Craster, and an extra manhole built for the sewer at the north side. Private drainage improvements have been made at Hartlaw, where sewage has been diverted away from a highway ditch, and at High Powburn, Radcliffe, the Cock House and the Bank Top at Lemmington, Newton Link House, Tarry, and Broomhill Cottage at Abberwick.

Ditches.—Sewage ditches have been cleaned out at Radcliffe, Shilbottle, Rennington, Newton-by-the-Sea, Acklington, South Charlton, Christon Bank, Glanton, Togston Hall, Fallodon, as well as the Broomhill and Togston burn. Rubbish shoots have been made into the tidal water at Craster.

Water Supplies.—Detailed plans and estimates have been sent to the Ministry of Health in connection with an application to borrow £1,500 for works of water supply for Alnmouth. A storage tank holding 5,000 gallons has been built by the Council for the top "pant" at Shilbottle, as well as one to hold 500 gallons for five cottages at Chapel Row at Craster north side. A noticeable private improvement has been made at Shipley Hill where the Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman has taken part of the small burn at its unpolluted source, and, by means of an hydraulic ram, pumped it up to Shipley Hill Farm and cottages at a cost of £400.

On Sir Hubert Swinburne's estate no water is laid into any farmhouse. In this connection I may mention that the powers vested in a local authority under the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, are so nominal that they may be said not to exist. No landlord can be forced to lay on a proper water supply unless it can be done within "a reasonable cost," which is the unreasonable sum of £8 13s 4d (a capital sum the interest of which at 5 per centum per annum equals 2d per week). It is pathetic to notice "gilded Dukes and belted Earls," and their rivals commercial magnates, shielding behind the miserable sum of £8 13s 4d, and their tenants, including old women, carrying water half a mile as before. This, in the phraseology of the democracy, is "the limit."

Conclusion.—During last year I have, as usual, endeavoured to inspect the whole of this rural district, and during my visits to every township I have called upon every District Councillor, 51 in number. The office of Sanitary Inspector has now been held by my late father and myself for about half a century, my paternal predecessor having been appointed in May 1873. I beg to express my indebtedness to the members and officials for their support, chiefly during the large amount of work which is carried out in committee by the public spirited members of your Authority.

M. TEMPLE WILSON,

Certificated Sanitary Inspector.

Member of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

Alnwick, 31st December, 1922.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S TABULAR STATEMENT.

	Water Supplies.	Drainage.	Privies, etc.	Ditches and Refuse.	Cow Sheds.	Slaughter Houses.	Bakehouse.	Animals and Fowls.	Other Nuisances.	Disinfections.	Total.
No. of Inspections.	78	105	244	96	32	17	3	10	3	15	603
Statutory Notices.			1								1
Defects remedied.			0								0
Informal Notices.		4	6		2			2	2		16
Defects remedied.			2		1			2			5

The Northern Press Ltd., Alnwick.